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Helping Organizations Retain Their Most Valuable Asset

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Tips for Keeping and Active Mind

- Exercise your mind. Just as physical activity keeps your body strong, mental activity keeps your mind sharp and agile. If you continue to learn and challenge yourself, your brain continues to grow, literally. How can you challenge yourself? Try the following tips:
 - Learning to play a musical instrument.
 - Playing Scrabble or doing crossword puzzles.
 - Interacting with people.
 - Starting a new hobby, such as crafts, painting, biking or bird-watching.
 - Volunteering.
 - Reading.
- Stay physically active. Daily physical activity can help improve blood flow. Some people find it's easier to get motivated when they exercise with a friend. During the day, you'll be more awake, more alert and quicker on the mental draw. Chances are if you're exercising regularly, you'll sleep better, too.
- Water is essential to the human body. Lack of water leads to dehydration, which can leave you feeling tired, making it hard to concentrate. Here are some tips:
 - Fill up a water bottle and keep it close at hand.
 - Have a glass of water at lunch instead of soft drinks, coffee or other beverages that may dehydrate you. It's cheaper on the pocketbook and better for your body.

Source: www.mayoclinic.com



Coping With Change

Traumatic life events and major changes are an inevitable part of life. From the death of a loved one, personal illness, financial set-back or divorce, to starting a new job or moving into a new home, change throughout life is constant. How is it that some people can move beyond crisis and disappointment and actually make their lives better, while others never quite recover and continue to suffer?

The changes that seem to cause us the most problems are the changes that we feel we have no control over. Indeed, numerous external events will force changes upon us, changes which we do not want, changes which can make our life painful and difficult.

People who deal effectively with traumas and changes understand that they have no control over such external events. They realize that they cannot change the traumas or crises; that they can only change themselves.

- Your greatest power in the face of adversity is your power to choose how you will react.

You may not be able to control the external event. But you can maintain your self-control by choosing your response.

Approaching change as a challenge

Your best approach to successfully deal with a major change is to approach the change as a challenge to be mastered. By doing so, you are recognizing change for what it really is, an opportunity to learn and improve and move forward with your life. You're choosing to be self-empowered and acknowledging that...

...you are responsible for your own health and happiness, no matter what happens to you.

Six major kinds of change

The first step in dealing effectively with change is to recognize change for what it is. Losing your job is change. Divorce is change. Finding out someone you love has a drinking problem is change.

Researchers have identified six major kinds of change that seem to cause the most turbulence in our lives:

1. Loss - Loss of anything that is important: a loved one, friendship, job, income, loss of a hope or dream.
2. Separation - Being apart (physically or emotionally)



from anyone or anything that is important to us: your job, home, loved ones, people or friends you are used to being with.

3. Relocation - Moving, whether it be from one house to another, one city to another, across the country, or moving your office down the hall.

4. A Change in a Relationship - A significant change in any relationship that is important to you: spouse, child, parents, close friends, associates at work, or boss.

5. A Change in Direction - A change in goals or focus: a new career path, getting married, retirement, going back to school, undergoing major surgery.

6. A Change in Health - A change brought on by illness or a health problem, or a change toward good health.

What makes change so difficult for some is that each of the major changes above always brings more change with it. One change is hard enough, but too many changes at once can be overwhelming. Divorce, for example, can change a lot more than just the relationship itself. It can change your finances, where you live, who you spend your time with, how often you get to see your children, and even what you do with the next several years of your life.

24 Hours a day: 800-343-2186 www.hmsincorp.com

Guidelines for dealing with change

1. Recognize and understand the change - Learn everything you can about the change. The more you know it, the better you'll be able to deal with it. Ask questions such as: What's the worse thing that can happen? What do I stand to lose because of this change? How is this change affecting me now? Who or what is in control of the effects of this change now? Is there a way to minimize the negative effects of the change? What result do I want to avoid? What result do I want to create?
2. Identify your opportunities - Begin by asking yourself, in light of your change: What are my possibilities and opportunities for growing? For learning? For becoming wiser? Stronger? Healthier? More loving? More productive? What benefits or gains are hidden in this call to change?
3. Choose your action - To deal effectively with change, there is nothing more important than what you actually do about it. Review your possibilities and then ask yourself: What is the most important thing for me to do next? What action can I take today? What action can I take tomorrow? Write down, on paper, the action steps you are going to take. Writing them down on paper is a well-proven method for making goals real and focuses you toward making them happen.

4. Review your progress and make adjustments - On a regular basis, review everything you are doing in dealing with the change. Ask yourself: Am I doing the right thing about this right now? Which strategies are working and which ones are not? Is there something else I should be doing?

The road through crisis and trauma

If you're currently experiencing the initial impact of a major loss or disappointment, you may wonder if you can ever feel good about your life again. It is normal, for a time, to feel hopeless, overwhelmed, confused, angry or beaten by your circumstances; these emotions are a normal part of the healing process.

However, after a period of time, these emotions will no longer serve you well. In fact, left unresolved, they can rob you of your motivation and enthusiasm for life, undermine your personal and professional relationships, trigger long-term depression and leave you highly vulnerable to physical illness.

If you feel "stuck," if you find yourself saying, "I don't know what to do next," follow the guidelines suggested above. Start by asking questions. The simple act of asking questions can not only lead to constructive answers, but also build your own conscious awareness that you are actually doing something about your life. That's something that will feel good to you and build your confidence and self-esteem.

The road through crisis and trauma is never easy. There will be setbacks and discouragement. But by approaching change as a challenge, believing in yourself and learning skills for dealing with change, you can learn to take control of change in your life. You can learn to enhance your life in spite of adversity and change.

HMS is here to help

Remember, Human Management Services (HMS) is always available to help you or your dependents with any type of personal, family or work-related concern or difficulty. All HMS services are prepaid by your employer and strictly CONFIDENTIAL. Why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

Get adequate sleep to help fight stress

Stress experts report that chronically stressed people almost always suffer from fatigue and people who are tired do not cope well with stress. When distressed people get more sleep, they feel better and are more resilient and adaptable in dealing with day-to-day events.

Did you know that most sleep difficulties (about 80%) are either caused or reinforced by our own behaviors or daily habits? If you have trouble sleeping, the tips below will help you get the most out of your hours in bed:

Stay away from stimulants. Coffee, tea, colas, chocolate and some over-the-counter medications contain caffeine which stimulates the central nervous system and increases blood pressure and heart rate. Drinking a can of cola or cup of coffee in the late afternoon can keep you awake at midnight. Avoid consuming caffeine at least 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.

Don't smoke, especially before bed. The nicotine in cigarettes is a stimulant. Insomnia is among smokers' greatest complaints. Research shows that smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often during the night than nonsmokers. Having a smoke before bed may feel relaxing, but it is actually putting a stimulant into your bloodstream.

Go to bed at regular hours. An erratic schedule can cause problems such as "Sunday night insomnia." This problem occurs to people who stay up late and sleep late on weekends and then try to switch back to their usual bedtime to prepare for Monday morning. Try to go to bed at roughly the same time each night and, no matter how long you slept, get up at your usual time in the morning.

Exercise regularly. Sleep is facilitated by relaxation and exercised muscles relax more easily. Aim for 20 minutes of exercise that increases your heart rate at least three times a week. Late afternoon is best.

Don't use alcohol to induce sleep. A nightcap can lull you to sleep, but alcohol typically produces light, unsettled sleep. Also, using alcohol to fall asleep could lead to dependency.

Establish a relaxing bedtime routine. Set the mood for relaxation before bed. Start letting down about an hour before bedtime: read, listen to music or take a warm bath.

Don't take sleeping pills; they induce less restful sleep and can cause serious problems. Oftentimes, the person relying on sleeping pills is left with his/her original insomnia, plus a drug problem.

HMS is here to help

If excessive stress is making sleep difficult or negatively impacting your daily life, Human Management Services (HMS) can help you with CONFIDENTIAL counseling or referrals. If you need help, why not call an HMS counselor today? We're here to help.

HUMAN MANAGEMENT SERVICES (HMS)

800-343-2186

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